

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO DEFEAT THE MUNDT BILL

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Washington 4, D.C.

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ACTION BULLETIN # 7

May 11, 1950

Congressional Situation

The Senate: The time of immediate danger has arrived. Based upon intimations of the Senate Majority Leader, we had estimated that the fight for the FEPC bill would consume at least three weeks on the calendar of the Senate. We recognized the serious possibility that opponents of FEPC would seek to displace it on the calendar by the Mundt-Nixon bill. Developments of the last few days indicate the immediate danger.

On May 9 the Senate order of business was a motion to take up the FEPC bill. The following day a move to displace the FEPC motion by a motion to take up the President's reorganization plan to eliminate the independent office of General Counsel to the National Labor Relations Board was carried by a vote of 53 to 22. It is obvious that a similar move might be made to take up the Mundt-Nixon bill, if the forces backing the FEPC bill fail, in the days immediately ahead, to bring sufficient pressure upon the Senate to prevent this.

More serious, however, is the plan of the Senate Majority Leader to abandon the fight on May 18, if 60 votes for cloture are not obtained on that day. The best present estimate of the available votes for cloture is 54 or less. Thus the FEPC fight, which was expected to consume at least three weeks, may end in less than one week (considering the time taken out for the National Labor Relations Board reorganization discussion). Accordingly, whether we have the requisite time to mobilize sufficient opposition to defeat the Mundt-Nixon bill, will depend in large measure upon the effective strength brought to bear by the pro-FEPC forces between now and May 18.

Either on May 22 or 29, or both days, the motion to recommit the Mundt bill to the Senate Judiciary Committee will be renewed. Senator Langer's motion for recommitment was defeated April 10 by a 7-6 vote. The committee normally meets each Monday, and a new motion to recommit can be made whenever one additional Senator is prepared to support it. However, Senators Langer and Magnuson will be out of town until the May 22 session. Democratic Senator O'Connor of Maryland is expected to leave for Europe after the May 29 meeting. He has consistently supported the Mundt bill, but there are indications he may be subject to pressure from other Democratic Senators to vote to recommit the bill. Maryland delegations should seek every opportunity to persuade him to do so before he goes abroad. Citizens of other States whose Senators are Democratic, and are believed to have reservations against the Mundt bill, should immediately urge these Senators to speak to O'Connor. Senators should be reminded of the position of the Administration on the Mundt-Nixon bill, reflected in the Justice Department's letter March 21 to the Un-American Activities Committee, which said the bill was not needed or desired at this time. (See Action Bulletin #3). Our efforts pressing for recommitment must have real force from now until May 29th.

The House: Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities were resumed May 2 for three days. They were suspended May 4 after six additional witnesses, all hostile to the bill, had been heard. The Un-American Activities Committee is not expected to schedule any more hearings for 2 or 3 weeks, during the absence of Chairman Wood.

All organizations that have not yet asked for time to testify should wire their request at once to Rep. Francis E. Walter of Pennsylvania, the acting chairman. A duplicate wire should go to your own Congressman, asking his assistance in obtaining a chance to testify in person against the bill. Those organizations which have already asked for time but have not received a reply should follow a similar procedure.

Testifying against the bill last week were the National Lawyers Guild, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Communist Party, Socialist Party, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the American Federation for Aid to Polish Jews. The appendix to the statement submitted by the latter group is regarded as so important that it is enclosed in its



entirety herewith. The point raised by this organization, that the Mundt-Nixon bill is "playing politics with relief funds," is an extremely basic one, not sufficiently emphasized heretofore. The threat of the Mundt-Nixon bill to such agencies as the International Red Cross, the Quakers, and all church groups which engage in charitable missionary work overseas, should be stressed in your appeal to many churches and other organizations you have not yet reached in local activity to defeat the Mundt bill.

### Field Activity

New York: A series of delegations visited Democratic Senator Herbert H. Lehman and Republican Senator Irving M. Ives during the past two months. Both Senators were originally noncommittal, but Senator Lehman is now telling constituents he will oppose the Mundt bill. On April 27, a delegation from the Flatbush Citizens Committee asked Senator Ives to state his position. The influential New York Senator authorized release of the following statement: "I was strongly opposed to the Mundt-Nixon bill of 1948. Furthermore, I am opposed to any bill of identical nature...If I find that this bill contains the objectionable features contained in the Mundt-Nixon bill of 1948, I shall be against it." The New York Committee to Defeat the Mundt Bill lists the following New York Congressmen as committed against the Mundt-Nixon bill: Reps. Celler, Dollinger, Klein, Multer, Powell and Roosevelt (Democrats), and Marcantonio (A.L.P.)

Montana: Governor John W. Bonner of Montana became the first Governor this year to publicly oppose the Mundt-Nixon bill. In letters to President Truman and the Montana Congressional delegation, he urged the bill's defeat as a measure which "substantially curtails civil rights guaranteed every American by the Constitution." The letter was also signed by the Montana Secretary of State, the Montana Attorney General, the speaker of the State legislature, and other high Montana officials. It was circulated by Montana opponents of the Mundt bill as an open letter, and other citizens of the State were urged to join Gov. Bonner in writing their Congressmen in Washington.

Colorado: On April 21, Governor Walter Johnson wrote the Colorado Congressional delegation: "I am deeply concerned that the effect of the Mundt bill may undermine the right of free speech and free thought, and would indirectly accomplish the destruction of any proscribed organization by laying its members open to intimidation and persecution. I urge you to do everything possible to defeat the Mundt bill under its present provisions." The Colorado Committee to Defeat the Mundt Bill reports a delegation discussed the bill with Rep. Carroll (Dem.) who issued no official statement but indicated he would oppose the bill in the House.

Massachusetts: Approximately 150 faculty members of Amherst College, Smith College, Mt. Holyoke College and the University of Massachusetts, last month signed a petition against the Mundt-Nixon bill circulated by the Amherst Committee of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. The petition was forwarded by the National Committee to Defeat the Mundt Bill to the Massachusetts Congressional delegation, at the Amherst Committee's request. It brought the following replies. Rep. Philbin (Dem.), April 21: "I am vigorously opposed to the principles presently contained in the Mundt-Nixon bill. I am opposed to all legislation of this character which seeks by governmental decree to strip free American citizens of their rights under the Constitution." Rep. Heselton (Dem.), May 8: "Unless this bill eliminates the objections which I had to the so-called Nixon bill of 1949, which I opposed and voted against, I would certainly not endorse this legislation."

Listed above are some of the highlights of activity reported from many States. In each case, statements by members of Congress are the product of a long, day-to-day campaign which only bore fruit after the legislator had heard from a number of his constituents. There is no substitute for the hard work of explaining the issues of the Mundt-Nixon bill to as many individuals and organizations as you can reach, and getting them to express their opposition to Congress.

### Sample Editorial

The National Committee has prepared and distributed a sample editorial against the Mundt bill. It is slanted primarily toward rural papers, but can be readily adapted for use in any other paper. If you have any contacts with any newspaper, or feel you can influence any editor to use such an editorial, write us at once for a copy.